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COLD-WAR AGENCY STUDIED BY TRUMAN

Political General Staff Would
Direct Psychological Attack,
Including Propaganda

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Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, March 21—The formation of a political general staff to coordinate and direct United States policy in the Cold War is being seriously considered at the highest levels of the Government.

It has been recognized for some time in the National Security Council, which is President Truman's top interdepartmental security committee, that the information, propaganda and other political warfare activities of the United States overseas need to be brought together under more forceful direction.

Consequently, it is understood that President Truman has authorized Rear Admiral Sidney W. Souers to review all nonmilitary Cold War activities and recommend ways and means of improving the coordination of the State Department, Defense Department and Central Intelligence Agency in this field.

Each of these agencies is now engaged in various propaganda and psychological activities, some of them widely known, such as the Voice of America, and others equally important but still highly classified. The personnel engaged in these activities has increased enormously since the start of the Korean war, and particularly since the start of the rearmament program early this year.

It is generally agreed here, however, that the lack of coordination between the open psychological offensive of the Government and its undercover activities has not been detrimental to United States political warfare activities overseas, and it would be the purpose of the proposed political general staff to devise coordinated policy directives to improve the present programs.

Central Agency Urged

At the present time, an interdepartmental committee, known as the National Psychological Strategy Board, is responsible for getting the various Government agencies together. This committee meets once a week under the chairmanship of Assistant Secretary of State Edward Barrett. Other members are Admiral Leslie C. Stevens, representing the Joint Chiefs of Staff; Gen. John Magruder, representing the Secretary of Defense, General of the Army George C. Marshall, and representatives of the Central Intelligence Agency, the Economic Cooperation Administration and the National Security Resources Board.

With the political warfare staffs of the State and Defense Departments and the Central Intelligence Agency increasing rapidly, however, the various influential officials having divergent ideas about whether and how much to get into undercover political warfare activities against the Communist world, all officials concerned agree on the need to fix responsibility for policy in these fields in one central spot.

This has produced precisely the kind of argument that developed here early in World War II before the organization of the Office of War Information and the Office of Strategic Services.

Now, at the time the State Department is studying that it must retain policy control over the overseas information bureaus of the Government, the Voice of America

ties of the Government has been cited by those here who are arguing that an agency outside the State Department should be established to deal with the expanding nonmilitary programs in the cold war.

The largest budget granted to Elmer Davis, when he was head of the Office of War Information, was \$53,825,367 in 1945, of which \$53,875,367 actually was spent. The present budget for the State Department's public affairs section is \$111,767,850, and a supplemental appropriation of \$97,000,000, mainly for building new radio transmitters, is now before Congress.

Senator William Benton, Democrat of Connecticut, a former Assistant Secretary of State who ran this program, is urging the creation of a separate agency to direct the political warfare job.

His idea, which has considerable support within the Executive Branch, is that the State Department should stick to policy and leave the actual operations in the propaganda field to another agency—just as the State Department lays down foreign economic policy and the E. C. A. operates the Marshall Plan programs.

A separate agency, supporters of the Benton thesis argue, would release the propagandists from the timidity and leisurely administrative procedures of the State Department and produce a more effective, free-swinging American propaganda overseas.

State Department Disagrees

The State Department, however, argues that the creation of a separate agency might mean that United States would be speaking to the world with two voices—the State Department's and the separate agency's. Policy and operations, State Department officials assert, cannot be entirely divorced from the department without weakening the propaganda pronouncements of the State Department itself and hampering the policy direction of the Voice of America.

Admiral Souers has been directed by the President to study this and related problems. The obvious, well-publicized activities of the Voice of America are, however, only part of the problem.

The decline of relations between Washington and Moscow and the constant use of subversive warfare methods by the Soviet and other Communist regimes has led to considerable support here for mobilizing the subversive warfare possibilities of the United States.

A need consequently has developed for more thorough study and coordination of all these policies, and it is reported that Admiral Souers, who is now in Key West with Mr. Truman, has delivered his recommendations to the White House.

Admiral Souers was a St. Louis business man before World War II. He also was a lieutenant commander in the Naval Reserve and served in the Office of Naval Intelligence during the war. He was made a rear admiral in 1945.

When he left the Navy at the end of hostilities, President Truman directed him to organize the central intelligence group, which is now known as the Central Intelligence Agency. On Aug. 29, 1947, the President named him to be Executive Secretary of the National Security Council. He resigned from that post on Jan. 15, 1950, but was retained by Mr. Truman as a consultant on top national security problems.

Propaganda Staff Doubled

The size of the propaganda effort alone is being used as an argument for taking the job out of the State Department. In the last year the overseas information and propaganda personnel in the department has almost doubled and is now more than one-quarter of the entire State Department payroll at home and abroad. The authorized personnel of the propaganda team at the department at the end of June, 1950, was 4,714. At the beginning of this month it was 8,267 out of a total State Department employment list of 32,349.

Similarly, the increase in the budget of the propaganda activi-

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